an assurance was given to Estimates Committee in 1992 that the shortage of 8,000 officers would be made up very soon;

(b) what are the reasons for increase in shortage by another 5,000 officers since 1992 and when it would be wiped out and how; and

(c) whether there is any time-frame for this?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Vacancies in the Army have existed since 1950. The deficiency in officers cadre was 10570 in the year 1992. At present there is a shortage of 11709 officers. The shortage is in the rank of Major and below.

(b) The increase in shortage is due to raising of new units to fulfill operational requirements. The risk factor involved in soldiering and increased availability of attractive alternative employment opportunities, add to the shortage. Sustained efforts, like periodic Image Projection Campaigns and seminars and lectures in schools and colleges, are made to motivate the youth to join the Army.

(c) Shortage of officers has been existent in the Army in varying degrees since 1950. It is not feasible to specify any time frame for liquidation of the shortage.

Schemes for welfare of Ex~Servicemen

1325. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of ex-servicemen as on date in the country, State-wise;

(b) the details of schemes being implemented for the welfare, rehabilitation and resettlement of ex-servicemen;

(c) the number of ex-servicemen benefited thereby, State-wise;

(d) whether there is any proposal to increase the amount for rehabilitation of ex-servicemen; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) As per statistics maintained by the Directorate General Resettlement (DGR), to total of 18,94,962 ex-servicemen (ESM) have been registered and reported to be surviving as on 30 September 2004. State wise number of ex-servicemen is given in the Statement (See below).

2. The following schemes for the welfare, rehabilitation and resettlement of ex-servicemen are being implemented:-

I. REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES:—

(A) Re-employment:

(i) Reservations in jobs:- The Central and State Governments are providing a number of concessions to ex-servicemen for their re-employment in Central/State Government posts. These include reservation of posts/ relaxation in age and educational qualifications, exemption from payment of application/examination fees, priority employment to disabled ex-servicemen. The Central Government has reserved 10% of vacancies in Group C posts and 20% in Group D posts for ex-servicemen. Central Public Sector Undertakings and Nationalised Banks provide 14.5% reservation in Group C and 24.5% in Group D posts available with them. 10% posts of Assistant Commandants in Central Para Military Forces are also reserved for ex-servicemen. 100% posts are reserved for ex-servicemen in Defence Security Corps. In addition, many State Governments are providing reservation to ex-servicemen in the State Government jobs.

During the year 2003, 11659 ex-servicemen have been provided re-employment.

(ii) Security Agencies:- The Directorate General of Resettlement registers/sponsors security agencies for providing security guards to various Public Sector Undertakings and industries in private sector. The Scheme, besides offering employment opportunities to ex-servicemen, also provides self-employment to retired defence officers. During the year 2004 (up to November), 18,261 ex-servicemen have been provided re-employment under the scheme.

(B) Self-employment**:**

(i) Loan Assistance Schemes:- Government has formulated several schemes for encouraging and giving financial support by way of loans to ex-servicemen entrepreneurs intending to set up small and medium industries. Important self employment schemes are Self Employment for Ex-Servicemen II (SEMFEX-II), National Equity Fund (NEF) Scheme and SEMFEX-III. Applications for sanction of loans are submitted by ex-servicemen directly to the concerned Zila Sainik Boards in the States. Applications are scrutinised and those who satisfy eligibility criteria and other terms and conditions are recommended for sanction of loan through banks and financial institutions. Number of ex-servicemen/widows benefited from the above schemes is as under:

SEMFEX-II	16,843	(Since inception of the scheme in 1988-89)
SEMFEX-III	899	(Since inception of the scheme in 1992-93)
NEF	36	(Since inception of the scheme in 2000-01)

(ii) Ex-Servicemen Coal Transportation Scheme:

Directorate General Resettlement sponsors Ex-Servicemen Coal Transport Companies for the execution of loading and transportation of coal in various coal subsidiaries of Coal India Limited. The unemployed retired officers registered with Directorate General Resettlement are selected to form Ex-Servicemen Coal Transport Companies and are sponsored to respective coal subsidiaries for five years, extendable by another four years. Presently, 101 such companies are operating under the various coal subsidiaries of Coal India Limited.

(iii) Coal Tipper Scheme:

Widows of defence personnel who died while in service due to causes attributable to military service can be sponsored by DGR for attaching one tipper truck in their name with an Ex-Servicemen Coal Transport Company. The eligible widows have to deposit Rs. 85,000/-with any one of the nominated companies towards margin money, loan processing, insurance, road tax etc. for the tipper to be acquired. The coal transport company is responsible for processing, running and maintenance costs of the tipper. The widow is paid Rs. 3,000/- per month for five years and thereafter, the initial deposit amount of Rs. 85,000/- is repaid to the

widow. At present, 289 widows/disabled soldiers are availing the benefit of this scheme.

(iv) Allotment of Oil Product Agencies Under Defence Category:

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas have reserved eight percent of the Oil Product Agencies, *i.e.* LPG dealership, petrol pumps, kerosene distributorship etc. in the marketing plan for widows and dependents of those who died in war/peace with death attributable to military service and disabled soldiers with disability of 20 percent and above attributable to military service. 753 eligibility certificates have been issued under Defence Category by Directorate General Resettlement during 2004 upto November, 2004.

(v) Management of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Stations in National Capital Region (NCR):

The scheme for management of CNG stations belonging to Indraprastha Gas Ltd. was launched as a pilot project in July 2001. The scheme has been extended to retired officers. As on date, 73 ex-servicemen are managing CNG Stations in Delhi.

(vi) Allotment of Army Surplus Vehicles:

Ex-Servicemen/widows of Defence personnel who died while in service are eligible to apply for allotment of Army surplus/phased out vehicles. Ex-servicemen can apply to Zila/Rajya Sainik Boards for registration and onward transmission to Army Headquarters for allotment on the basis of depot wise seniority maintained by them. During the year 2004, 452 surplus vehicles have been allotted to ex-servicemen up to November, 2004.

(vii) Allotment of Mother Dairy Milk and Fruit & Vegetable Shops in and around Delhi:

Junior Commissioned Officers/Other Ranks are allotted Mother Diary Milk Shops and Fruit & Vegetable shops in National Capital Region. During the year 2004,1735 ex-servicemen have been provided placement by allotment of Mother Diary Booths and Fruit & Vegetable shops till date.

II. TRAINING:

Training for both ex-servicemen and retiring service personnel is one of

the major tasks involved in rehabilitation and resettlement. The emphasis of the programmes run by Director General Resettlement has been on organizing employment/self-employment oriented training so as to provide viable options to such trainees for commencing second career after retirement. These training programmes include courses on management, technology, imparting of technical skills, and knowledge about agro based industry etc. The number of ex-servicemen/retiring defence personnel imparted training during the last three years and during 2004-05 till date is given below:-

Year	Number of beneficiaries
2001-2002	7,221
2002-2003	6,704
2003-2004	8,450
2004-2005	7,772

III. WELFARE SCHEMES FOR EX-SERVICEMEN:

(i) Financial Assistance from Raksha Mantri's Discretionary Fund:

A portion of the earnings of Armed Forces Flag Day Fund is set apart as Raksha Mantri's Discretionary Fund which is used to provide financial assistance to poor and needy ex-servicemen is for various purposes *viz.* medical treatment, daughters' marriage, house repair, education of children etc. Montly financial assistance of Rs. 1000/- for up to **a** period of two years is also provided to old and infirm ex-servicemen/widows of ex-servicemen living in penury. Number of beneficiaries during the last three years is as under:-

Year	Number of beneficiaries
2001-2002	754
2002-2003	2011
2003-2004	402

(ii) Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS):

Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme, introduced with effect from

1st April, 2003 is based on the pattern of Central Government Health Scheme. On retirement, every service personnel-drawing pension will compulsorily become a member of the scheme by contributing his/her share. Similarly, ex-servicemen who have already retired can become members by making lumpsum one-time contribution or in three consecutive yearly installments. The rates of contribution vary from Rs. 1800 to Rs. 18,000 based on pension/family pension. The war widows have been exempted from payment of ECHS contribution.

Ex-servicemen/dependents who are non-pensioners would continue to get financial assistance from Armed Forces Flag Day Fund for treatment of specified serious diseases.

(iii) Educational Concessions and facilities for wards of ex-servicemen/widows:

Reservation of seats have been made for the wards of ex-servicemen/ widows in Sainik Schools, MBBS, IITs/Polytechnics and other professional courses. Free educational facilities to children of defence personnel killed or disabled in action is provided in schools/colleges recognised by the Central or State Governments.

(iv) Canteen Stores Department (CSD) facilities:

Ex-Servicemen and their families are entitled to Canteen facilities available in Units/establishments.

(v) Travel Concession:

Rail Travel Concenssion: 75% concessions in rail fare for travel in II Class is available to war widows. Besides, recipients and widows of posthumous recipients of Chakra series of gallantry awards along with a companion are entitled to free rail pass for travelling in Class i/ll AC Sleeper.

Air Travel Concession: Gallantry Award winners and permanently war disabled officers and their dependents are eligible for 75% and 50% concession respectively.

3. There is no specific budget allocation for operating various schemes for the rehabilitation and resettlement of ex-servicemen. The Government, however, provide budgetary allocation of Directorate General Resettlement for conducting training to ex-servicemen. Various rehabilitation and

resettlement schemes are implemented by respective agencies, such as Banks, Financial Institutions, Oil Companies under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Coal India Limited, etc. The data concerning ex-servicemen benefited from the various welfare and resettlement schemes is not monitored state-wise.

Statement

Statewise Number of Ex-Servicemen

SI.No.	State/UT	No. of Ex-servicemen
1.	Andhra Pradesh	67022
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	284
3.	Assam	26755
4.	Bihar	55890
5.	Chhattisgarh	3951
6.	Goa	1772
7.	Gujarat	18131
8.	Himachal Pradesh	91502
9.	Haryana	198716
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	61663
11.	Jharkhand	15983
12.	Karnataka	57435
13.	Kerala	144440
14.	Madhya Pradesh	33695
15.	Maharashtra	157996
16-	Manipur	4312
17.	Meghalaya	2043
18.	Mizoram	4376
19.	Nagaland	2246
20.	Orissa	22904
21.	Punjab	245763
22.	Rajasthan ..	128978
23.	Sikkim	1144

SI.No.	State/UT	No. of Ex-servicemen
24.	Tamil Nadu	114895
25.	Tripura	1981
26.	Uttar Pradesh	221619
27.	Uttaranchal	114496
28.	West Bengal	51775
29.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	591
30.	Chandigarh	7429
31.	Delhi	33772
32.	Pondicherry	1403
	TOTAL	1894962

Note: Figures for the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya Nagaland, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Andaman & Nocobar Islands are provisional.

Accidents of air Force Planes and Helicopters

1326. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Air Force Planes/Helicopters meet with accidents often resulting in heavy loss;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to prevent such accidents?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Flying of fighter planes by its very nature entails an inherent risk. Aircraft crashes do result in financial loss in terms of aircraft damaged/lost, alongwith injuries/casualties of pilots and civilians.

(b) Major causes of aircraft accidents are Human Error (HE), Technical Defect (TD) and Bird Hit (BH).

(c) A continuous and multi-faceted effort is always underway in the Indian Air Force to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Measures to